

“Praying Always Without Losing Heart”

Prayer in the Life of Catholic Medical Students and Physicians



Fr. Roger J. Landry

Catholic Medical Association Medical Student and Resident Bootcamp

June 18, 2020

The Indispensable Necessity of Prayer



- The significant choice to begin the annual CMA Boot Camp with formation in prayer.
- The crisis of secularism, living as God does not exist.
- Remembering we have souls, not just bodies and minds. Integrating regular prayer so that we can truly serve the whole person of others.
- We cannot be a Catholic, or be fully human, without prayer.

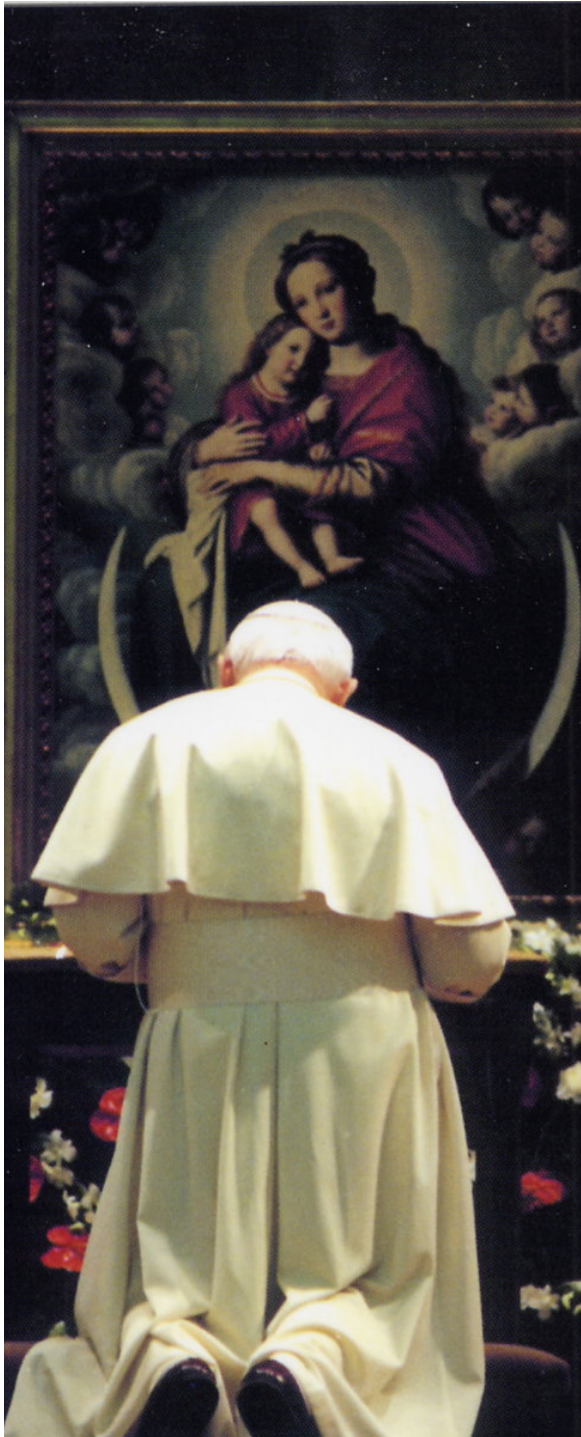
St. John Paul II on the Necessity of Prayer



- “Training in holiness calls for a Christian life distinguished above all in the art of prayer...” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte* 32-34)
- “Prayer cannot be taken for granted. We have to learn to pray: as it were learning this art ever anew from the lips of the Divine Master himself, like the first disciples: ‘Lord, teach us to pray!’” (Lk 11:1).
- “It would be wrong to think that ordinary Christians can be content with a shallow prayer that is unable to fill their whole life. Especially in the face of the many trials to which today's world subjects faith, they would be not only mediocre Christians but Christians at risk.’ They would run the insidious risk of seeing their faith progressively undermined, and would perhaps end up succumbing to the allure of ‘substitutes,’ accepting alternative religious proposals and even indulging in far-fetched superstitions.”

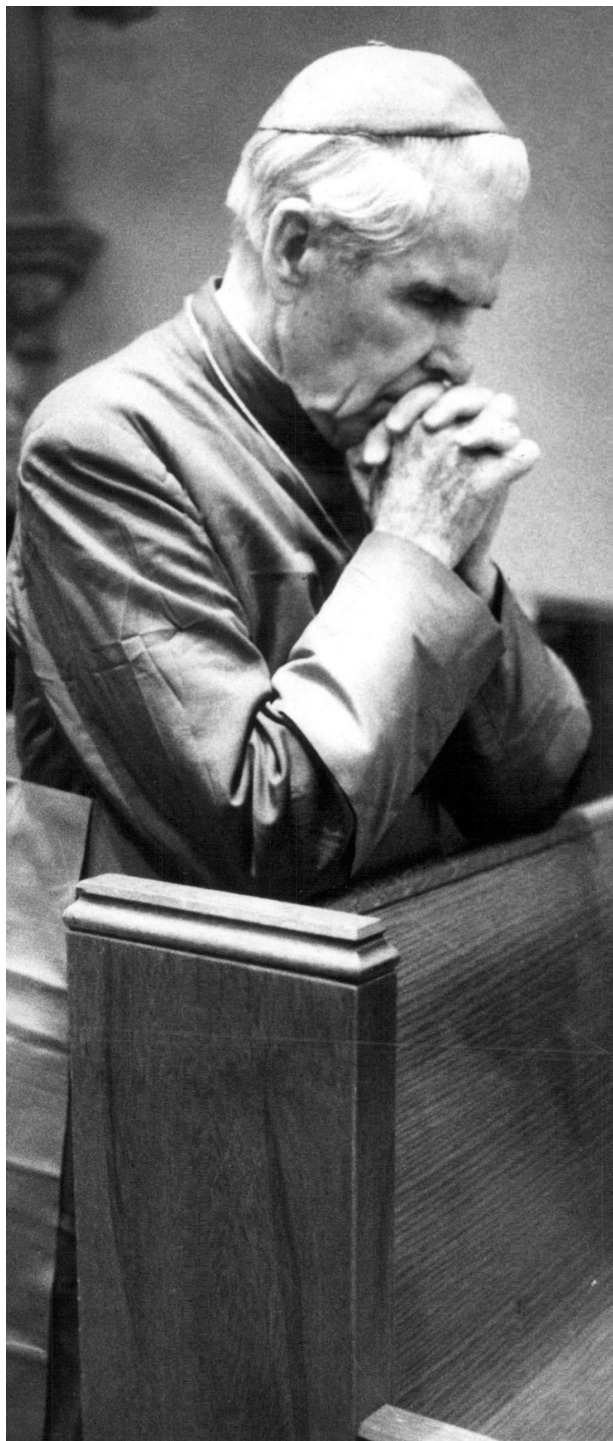
St. John Paul II on the Necessity of Prayer

- “It is essential that education in prayer should become in some way a key-point of all pastoral planning.”
- “Prayer develops that conversation with Christ which makes us his intimate friends: ‘Abide in me and I in you’ (Jn 15:4). This reciprocity is the very substance and soul of the Christian life, and the condition of all true pastoral life.”
- “Learning this Trinitarian shape of Christian prayer and living it fully, above all in the liturgy, the summit and source of the Church's life, but also in personal experience, is the secret of a truly vital Christianity.”



Making Time for Prayer


- Prioritizing God in life
 - The temptation to make God just an “important part” of our life, trying to squeeze in time for Him, rather than building our life on our relationship with him.
 - Set a fixed time for prayer
 - Learn how to say no to other goods to choose the pearl of great price.
 - Avoid the activist spirituality of Martha in the kitchen, trying to feed him rather than be fed by him. *Fiat* versus *faciam*.
- Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen: “If we’re too busy for prayer, we need *two* holy hours.”
- The importance of silence





What Prayer Is

- Prayer is an *art* not a *technique*.
- Prayer is fundamentally an exchange of persons, not just words, thoughts or affections. Mutual abiding.
- “We do not know how to pray as we ought but the Spirit himself intercedes for us” (Rom 8:26-27).
- The Holy Spirit helps us not by putting words on our lips but transforming us to pray as beloved children of God.



Learning to Pray

- “Lord, teach us to pray” (Lk 11:1)
- Jesus came from heaven to earth to teach us how to receive the Father’s love and respond.
- Jesus teaches us to pray through:
 - His example of prayer
 - His actual recorded prayers in the Gospels
 - What he teaches us about the proper dispositions needed for prayer
 - What he teaches us through the Our Father

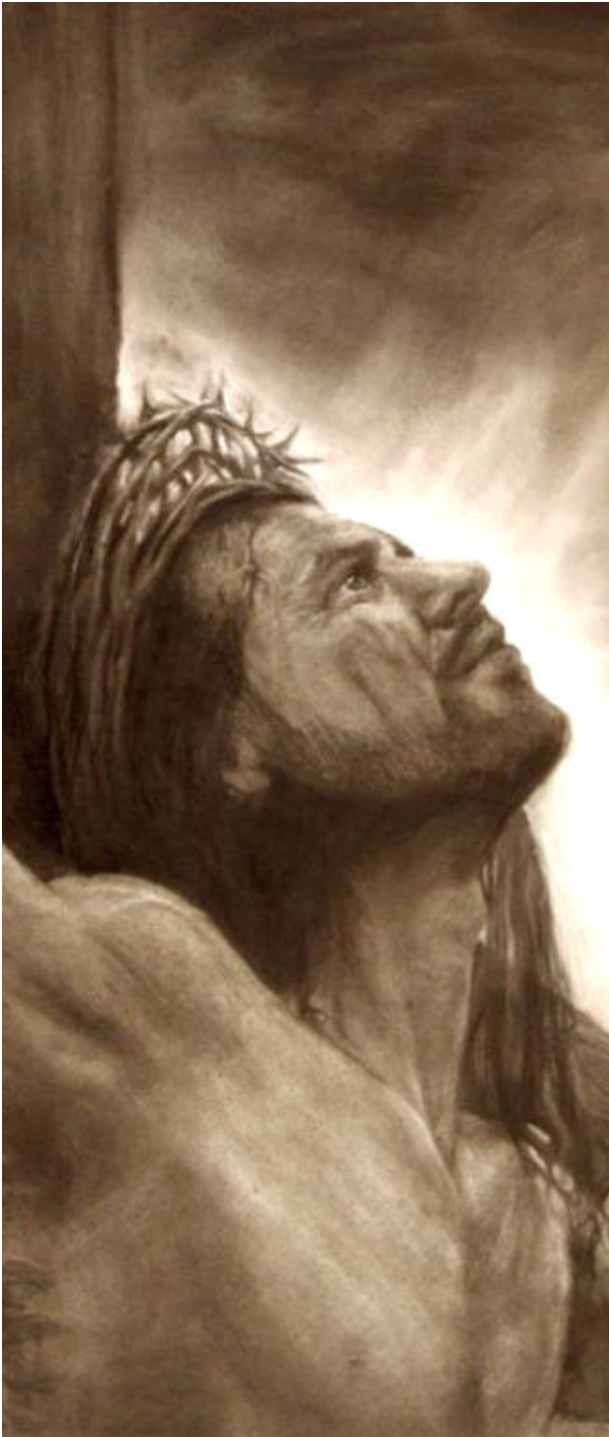
Jesus' Example of Prayer



- Prayer was something Jesus was always doing.
 - Taking himself apart early in the morning to have quiet time with the Father.
 - We see him praying
 - For 40 days in the Desert
 - Before calling the 12 apostles
 - Before his Transfiguration
 - Before several of his miracles, like healing the deaf mute or raising Lazarus from the dead
 - During the Last Supper
 - In the Garden of Gethsemane
 - On the Cross
- In his prayer, he says to us, “Follow me!”

Jesus' Actual Prayers

- For the most part, we don't know the content of Jesus' vital prayer life. Often he prayed in silence or with sighs (Mk 7:34).
- But some of his prayers have been recorded by the evangelists:
 - Praising the Father for revealing the truths of the kingdom to the childlike (Mt 11:25-30)
 - Asking the Father for the miracle of raising Lazarus on the 4th day (Jn 11:41-23)
 - Jesus' great priestly prayer (Jn 17:1-26)
 - Prayer to do the Father's will in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:36-45)
 - Prayers from the Cross, for the Father to have mercy, "*Eloi, Eloi lema sabachtani,*" commending his spirit to the Father.






Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

- To the Father, helped by the Spirit, as beloved children confident in the Father's knowledge and love.
- In his name – asking together with him.
- Pray with:
 - **Faith** – Faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains, asking, seeking, knocking. “All things are possible for one who believes.”
 - **Humility and repentance** – Pharisee and publican
 - **Conversion of heart** – reconciled with others, loving enemies.
 - **Rectitude of intention** – Not for others to see but to our father in our “inner room.”
 - **Sincerity** – Not heaping up empty phrases.
 - **Union with the will of God** – “Not those who cry out ‘Lord, Lord,’ but who do the will of the Father.
 - **Vigilance** – “Stay awake and pray”
 - **Perseverance** – Like the importune friend and importune widow

What Jesus Teaches Us in the Lord's Prayer

- God and us
 - “Father” – all prayer is directed to him
 - “Our” – We pray together with the whole Church. “Where two or more are gathered”
- Praise centered on God
 - “Who Art in Heaven” – Start with Praise
 - “Hallowed by thy name” – through our sanctification
 - “Thy kingdom come” – not ours
 - “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” – The way we enter his kingdom and hallow his name





What Jesus Teaches Us in the Lord's Prayer

- Petitions regarding ourselves and others
 - “Give us this day our *epiousios* bread” – God’s generosity in providing for us not just material food but the Eucharist, each day.
 - “Forgive us our trespasses as we have forgiven...” – Prayer for mercy, opened to receive it through our being merciful like the Father
 - “Lead us not into temptation” – We’re asking for the strength to remain faithful when tempted, to choose God.
 - “Deliver us from the Evil One” – We ask for protection from the devil, his empty promises and evil works.



Learning Prayer through Mary

- Mary taught the early Church how to pray.
- Overshadowed by the Holy Spirit.
- Woman of faith – “Blessed are you who believed”
- Contemplative memory: “Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Lk 2:19,51).
- Woman of the Word
 - Synthesizes Scripture, as we see in her *Magnificat*.
 - The spirituality of the *fiat*.
- Woman of Silence.
- Asks questions: “How can this be?”
- Intercessory prayer: she goes to Jesus directly as in Cana.

Forms of Prayer


- This refers to the “content” of our prayer. Just as in human conversations, we’ll occasionally thank others for kindnesses, we’ll praise them if they’ve done something well, we’ll ask for their forgiveness if we’ve hurt them in any way, we’ll ask them for things they might be able to help us with; it’s the same way with God.
- Our conversation with God, from our end, can take the form of:
 - **Praising, adoring and blessing** Him for who he is
 - **Thanking** Him for his abundant gifts to us, to others, to the world
 - Sorrowfully **begging his forgiveness** for our sins and those of others.
 - **Interceding** with him for what others need
 - **Petitioning** him for what we need



Expressions of Prayer

- This refers to the actual “structure” that guides our prayer with the Lord. There are essentially three traditional expressions of prayer:
 - **Vocal prayer** – When we pray with the words given to us by others. *Mens concordet voci*. Need to align our minds to what our words say. We begin with *words*.
 - **Meditation** – When we “chew” on particular texts or items, breaking them down to understand them. We begin with *thoughts*. Two most famous methods:
 - St. Ignatius’ Composition of Place.
 - The Benedictine *Lectio Divina*
 - **Contemplation** – When we pray fundamentally from the heart through *affections*. It’s a gaze fixed on God, a silent love, by which God gives an interior knowledge.





Fonts of Prayer

- This refers to the raw materials we use to seek, find, love, obey and become more like God.
- There are several wells that enable us to drink of the Spirit:
 - **Word of God**
 - **Liturgy of the Church**
 - The theological virtues (**faith, hope and love**) by which “God speaks” in human behavior.
 - **Day-to-Day life**, the events that occur during the day, bringing them to the Lord of history

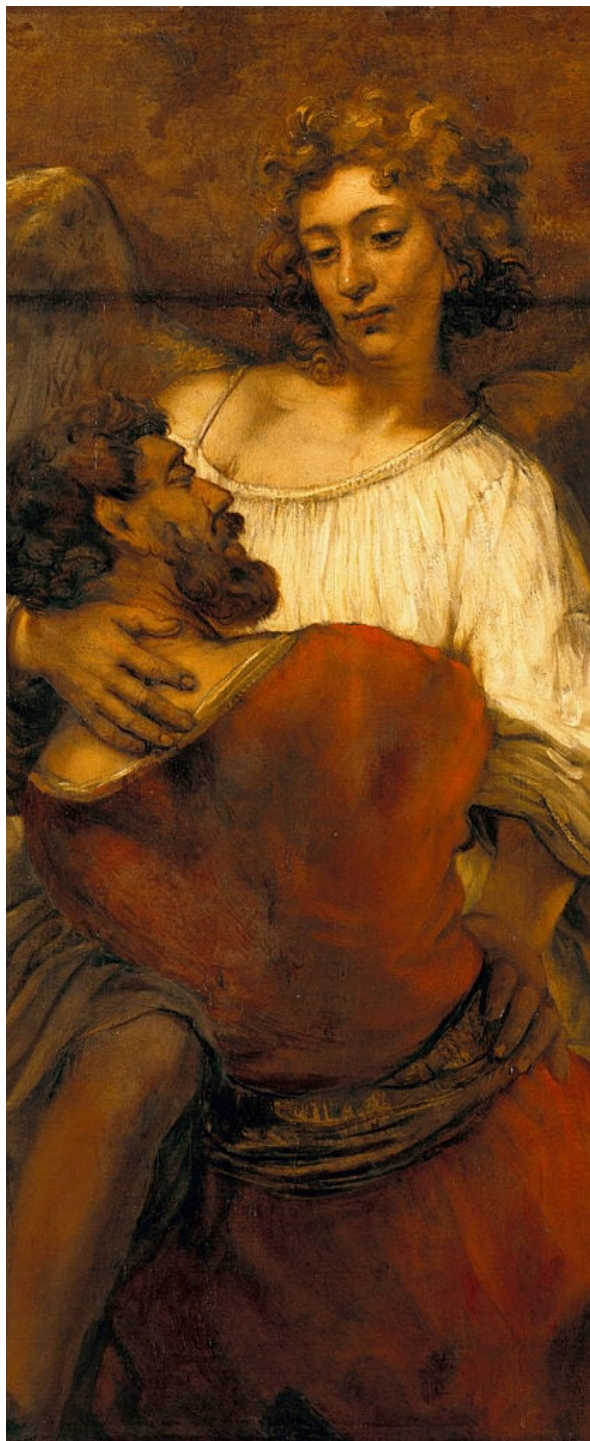


Guides of Prayer

- This refers to those who can teach us to pray better. There are several:
 - The saints
 - The spiritualities and charisms – Carmelite, Franciscan, Dominican, Jesuit, etc. – that have been handed on.
 - The Christian family
 - Ordained Ministers
 - Religious Fathers, Sisters, Brothers
 - Catechists
 - Spiritual directors
 - Prayer Groups

Obstacles to Prayer

- Dryness
- Distractions
- Discouragement, normally when we feel that our prayers haven't been heard and we're a failure.
- Fear of what God might ask and trying therefore to control the conversation with God.
- Lack of faith
- Lack of perseverance. Acedia.
- Lack of practical love for God in living the Christian life.



FOREWORD BY MATTHEW KELLY

Plan of Life

ROGER J. LANDRY

HABITS
TO HELP
YOU GROW
CLOSER
TO GOD



For More

If you would like more help on integrating prayer into your life so that you might become an “existence made prayer” and experience the secret of a “truly vital Christianity,” I would encourage you to read my 2018 book, *Plan of Life, Habits to Help You Grow Closer to God*, available through the Daughters of St. Paul (Pauline Books and Media) and via Amazon.com.

I wrote the book to help people learn the habits so that they might be able to “pray always without losing heart,” by learning how to keep the presence of God not just in formal times of prayer but in their work and family life.

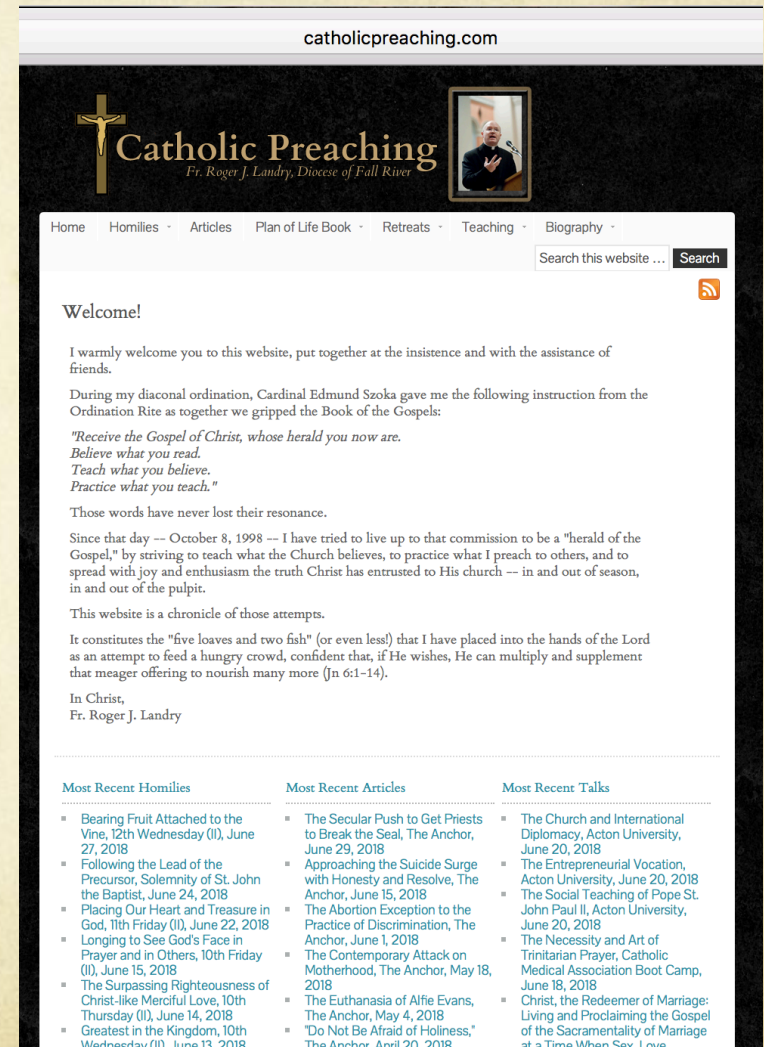
For the Slides of this Talk

You may download a PDF of the
Powerpoint slides of this talk
and listen to the audio recording

by going to
www.catholicpreaching.com
and then clicking on the appropriate link
under “Most Recent Talks”

Fr. Roger J. Landry

Email: fatherlandry@catholicpreaching.com



The screenshot shows the homepage of the website [catholicpreaching.com](http://www.catholicpreaching.com). The header features a gold cross logo and the text "Catholic Preaching" with "Fr. Roger J. Landry, Diocese of Fall River" underneath. A small photo of Fr. Landry is in the top right. A navigation menu includes Home, Homilies, Articles, Plan of Life Book, Retreats, Teaching, and Biography. A search bar is present. The main content area has a "Welcome!" section with a warm greeting and a quote from Cardinal Edmund Szoka: "Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are. Believe what you read. Teach what you believe. Practice what you teach." Below this is a paragraph about the author's ordination in 1998 and a mission statement. At the bottom, there are three columns of "Most Recent" content: Homilies, Articles, and Talks, each with a list of recent posts.

catholicpreaching.com

Catholic Preaching
Fr. Roger J. Landry, Diocese of Fall River

Home Homilies Articles Plan of Life Book Retreats Teaching Biography

Search this website ... Search

Welcome!

I warmly welcome you to this website, put together at the insistence and with the assistance of friends.

During my diaconal ordination, Cardinal Edmund Szoka gave me the following instruction from the Ordination Rite as together we gripped the Book of the Gospels:

*"Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are.
Believe what you read.
Teach what you believe.
Practice what you teach."*

Those words have never lost their resonance.

Since that day -- October 8, 1998 -- I have tried to live up to that commission to be a "herald of the Gospel," by striving to teach what the Church believes, to practice what I preach to others, and to spread with joy and enthusiasm the truth Christ has entrusted to His church -- in and out of season, in and out of the pulpit.

This website is a chronicle of those attempts.

It constitutes the "five loaves and two fish" (or even less!) that I have placed into the hands of the Lord as an attempt to feed a hungry crowd, confident that, if He wishes, He can multiply and supplement that meager offering to nourish many more (Jn 6:1-14).

In Christ,
Fr. Roger J. Landry

Most Recent Homilies	Most Recent Articles	Most Recent Talks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Bearing Fruit Attached to the Vine, 12th Wednesday (II), June 27, 2018▪ Following the Lead of the Precursor, Solemnity of St. John the Baptist, June 24, 2018▪ Placing Our Heart and Treasure in God, 11th Friday (II), June 22, 2018▪ Longing to See God's Face in Prayer and in Others, 10th Friday (II), June 15, 2018▪ The Surpassing Righteousness of Christ-like Merciful Love, 10th Thursday (II), June 14, 2018▪ Greatest in the Kingdom, 10th Wednesday (II), June 13, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Secular Push to Get Priests to Break the Seal, The Anchor, June 29, 2018▪ Approaching the Suicide Surge with Honesty and Resolve, The Anchor, June 15, 2018▪ The Abortion Exception to the Practice of Discrimination, The Anchor, June 1, 2018▪ The Contemporary Attack on Motherhood, The Anchor, May 18, 2018▪ The Euthanasia of Alfie Evans, The Anchor, May 4, 2018▪ "Do Not Be Afraid of Holiness," The Anchor, April 20, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Church and International Diplomacy, Acton University, June 20, 2018▪ The Entrepreneurial Vocation, Acton University, June 20, 2018▪ The Social Teaching of Pope St. John Paul II, Acton University, June 20, 2018▪ The Necessity and Art of Trinitarian Prayer, Catholic Medical Association Boot Camp, June 18, 2018▪ Christ, the Redeemer of Marriage: Living and Proclaiming the Gospel of the Sacramentality of Marriage at a Time When Sex, Love,

“Praying Always Without Losing Heart”:

Prayer in the Life of Catholic Medical Students and Physicians



Questions and Discussion